



# THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

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## PRESS RELEASE

Statement of Most Reverend Salvatore Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco  
Monday, July 29, 2013

(July 29, 2013) SAN FRANCISCO – The whole Church owes a debt of gratitude to Pope Francis for reiterating the Church’s love and welcome to all people, especially those who experience same-sex attraction, who often feel alienated from the Church. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, these brothers and sisters of ours “must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith issued a Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons in 1986 that stated this principle even more strongly: “It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church’s pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law.” It is, indeed, a sign of a weakening of civilization when it is deemed acceptable to treat any segment of the population with anything less than the love and respect all deserve as children of God.

Of course the Church must be a place of welcome for people who experience same-sex attraction. The Church must be a safe place where they can feel secure and loved in revealing their orientation to others. No one has ever denied this, but we need to do a better job at making this known and following through on it. The Church must also be a community that assists her members in responding to the call to holiness. This is why the Church has support groups for people who can benefit from such help in living virtuously in their relationships. While the Church does not judge individuals, the Church does judge actions, for we know that some acts violate human dignity while others make us more truly human according to the image in which God originally made us. With regard to sexual acts, the Church has always faithfully taught, and always will, the teaching she has received from her Lord, namely, that they find their proper order and purpose within the marital union of husband and wife, and outside of the bond

of marriage they are sinful. Both natural and revealed law teach us this truth. While everyone struggles with this to some degree, healthy societies encourage and support people to live in accordance with it.

With regard to priests, the call to the Priesthood is one of spiritual paternity. The same kind of qualities required for a man to be a successful husband and father of a family are required of the priest; renouncing marriage and his own family must be a sacrifice for the priest if he is going to be effective and truly happy in his Priesthood. This is the gauge by which we must measure whether or not a man has a call to the Priesthood. I am deeply grateful to so many wonderful priests I have known and have been privileged to work with in my many assignments who serve the Church with such great generosity and spiritual paternal affection.

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